

50 (New) The composite material of claim 47, wherein a mass ratio of $\text{Si}_3\text{N}_4:\text{Me}_5\text{Si}_3$ is between about 20:80 and about 80:20.

51 (New) The composite material of claim 47, wherein the parent substance includes sinter additives.

AC 52 (New) The composite material of claim 51, wherein the sinter additives include at least one of aluminum oxide and yttrium oxide.

53 (New) The composite material of claim 51, wherein a concentration of the sinter additives in an initial mixture is less than about 10 % by weight.

54 (New) The composite material of claim 47, wherein the metal silicide is Nb_5Si_3 ---

Remarks

This Preliminary Amendment cancels, without prejudice, original claims 1 to 27 in the underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE99/03155, and adds new claims 28 to 54. The new claims conform the claims to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules and do not add new matter to the application.

The above amendments to the specification and abstract are to conform the specification and abstract to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules or to correct informalities, and do not introduce new matter into the application.

The underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE99/03155 includes an International Search Report, dated March 8, 2000. The Search Report includes a list of documents that were uncovered in the underlying PCT Application. A copy of the Search Report accompanies this Preliminary Amendment.

Applicants assert that the subject matter of the present application is new, non-obvious, and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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